

INTERPRETATIONS & APPLICATIONS
OF BUILDING CODES & REGULATIONS #99-9



CODE SECTION : UBC 1203

6/01/99

SUBJECT : PROTECTION AT WINDOW WELLS

For emergency escape exiting requirements, see Section 310.4.

“When a guardrail is used for protection around a window well enclosure, the egress ladder shall extend to the top of the guardrail.

When a grate is used as a window well enclosure, an accessible section shall be openable with a minimum net area of 5.7 square feet (0.53 m²), and with a minimum net opening dimension of 24 inches (610 mm) in any direction.”

Light Wells. A light well may be used at exterior windows located below the adjacent ground level for natural light and/or ventilation when complying with the following:

- “1. The minimum horizontal width of well (dimension perpendicular to window) shall be 24 inches (610 mm), when the vertical depth of the well is 48 inches (1,219 mm) or less.
- “2. The minimum horizontal width of well (dimension perpendicular to window) shall be 36 inches (914 mm), when the vertical depth of the well is more than 48 inches (1,219 mm) but less than 72 inches (1,829 mm).
- “3. The minimum horizontal width of well (dimension perpendicular to window) shall be 48 inches (1,219 mm), when the vertical depth of the well exceeds 72 inches (1,829 mm).

The depth of the well may be measured from the window sill to the top of the well. Where the well is 30 inches (762 mm) or more in depth, a grate or guardrail shall be provided to enclose the well. The length of the well shall extend at least 4 inches (102 mm) beyond each side of window.